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ABSTRACT

Comprehensive planning has been identified as an essential ingredient in the efforts of local schools to increase the responsiveness of vocational education. This report describes the reality of comprehensive vocational education planning as it occurs in a wide variety of educational and environmental contexts, suggests ways that have the potential for improving the technology of vocational education planning, and describes procedures that were used to produce the findings. The report is the result of field work observations in 1980 in the states of Wisconsin, West Virginia, Florida, and Oklahoma and dialogue sessions conducted in these states and in Colorado, Texas, Georgia, and Kansas during the preceding year. The report identifies the legislative and environmental context under which local vocational education planning takes place and notes context conditions which affect such planning. The context conditions serve as a background for descriptions of the nature of interagency coordinative and collaborative relationships in support of planning, for ways that data and evaluation are used in local planning, for local level planning processes, and for a discussion of selected issues in vocational education planning. Planning tools and techniques, and training materials and activities whose development can potentially improve the technology of local vocational education planning and develop the skills of persons who do this planning, are also described. Finally, procedures are presented that serve as a basis for the findings which are reported. (KC)

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CONDITIONS AFFECTING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING

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FOREWORD

Comprehensive planning has been identified as an essential ingredient in the efforts of local schools to increase the responsiveness of vocational education. This report describes the reality of comprehensive vocational education planning as it occurs in q wide variety of educational and environmental contexts, suggests ways that have the potential for improving the technology of vocational education planning, and describes procedures that were used to produce the findings.

This report is the result of fieldwork observations in 1980 in the states of Wisconsin, West Virginia, Florida, and Oklahoma and dialogue sessions conducted in these states and in Colorado, Texas, Georgia, and Kansas during the preceding year.

Special appreciation is extended to Dr. Mary Ellis, President, Ellis Associates; Dr. Gil Cardenas, Associate Professor, Pan American University; and Dr. James Hale, Associate Professor, University of Florida, who provided methodological assistance to staff. Thanks are also due to Mr. Harold Sullivan, Associate Director, Administration and Planning, Bureau of Vocational-Technical and Adult Education, West Virginia; Dr. Dan Koble, Director of Occupational Education, Putnam/ Northern Westchester BOCES, New York; Dr. Ralph Bregman, Director of Evaluation, the National Advisory Council for Vocational Education; Dr. Mary Ellis; and Drs. Richard Ruff and Nina Selz, Research Specialists, the National Center for their expert review of the content of this report.

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Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
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in Vocational Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program staff visited a number of local secondary and postsecondary schools, and community-based organizations that are concerned with training for the world of work. On-site observations and dialogue sessions contributed to an understanding of the current realities of vocational education planning.

The report identifies the legislative and environmental contexts under which local vocational education planning takes place and notes context conditions which affect such planning. The context conditions serve as a background for descriptions of the nature of interagency coordinative and collaborative relationships in support of planning, for ways that data and evaluation are used in local planning, for local level planning processes, and for a discussion of selected issues in vocational education planning. Planning tools and techniques, and training materials and activities whose development can potentially improve the technology of local vocational education planning and capacitate the skills of persons who do this planning, are also described. Lastly, procedures are presented that serve as a basis for the findings which are reported.

The current status of vocational education planning at the state and local levels can be summarized as follows.

- From the perspective of state divisions of vocational education and local schools, federal legislation is an appropriate vehicle for expressing national purposes for vocational education. Federal legislation is not an appropriate vehicle for prescribing the substantive nature or the process of vocational education planning.
- The federal legislative framework for vocational education planning emphasizes a state-local cooperative planning effort. However, the specificity and detail of federal rules and regulations for implementing the legislation have created an atmosphere and appearance of compliance-oriented, top-down planning. A compliance-oriented, top-down approach to planning, coupled with sanctions for noncompliance, is counterproductive to federal legislative intent for vocational education planning.
- Federal policy towards vocational education should stress a collaborative partnership with the states in sharing constitutional authority for providing vocational education. Both the federal government and the states need to establish systems of incentives that will encourage greater local participation in the planning process. Incentives should be positive and permit discretion and innovation in planning on the part of local schools.
- State divisions of vocational education and local schools do comply with the prescribed mechanics of planning and evaluation requirements mandated by federal law.
- Local applications and state plans for vocational education are not real planning documents. State plans for vocational education are really reports about the (more or less) intended use of federal funds. States need to be encouraged to try innovative ways to engage in cooperative state-regional-local planning to produce meaningful state plan

documents. These documents should give emphasis to descriptions of student, community, and employer needs; to alternative procedures and programs for dealing with these needs; to costs and intended benefits; and to evaluations of successes and failures in implementing the procedures and programs. The current stress on goals, when local schools have so little "ownership", involvement, and responsibility in the development of state plans, leads to many plans being mere wish-books.

- Fieldwork experiences indicate that there is a positive climate for coordinated/collaborative planning to make the best use of available resources. Research and development are needed to find the most efficient ways to remove current barriers to effective coordination/collaboration in planning a statewide framework for a more responsive vocational education.
- Although vocational administrators express an interest in more adequately serving special populations (and many instances of services and programs to do so were observed), formal planning to accomplish this is not especially evident.
- There is too much emphasis on the mechanics of evaluation, both in federal legislation and in the states. Historically, evaluation is conducted for program improvement purposes. However, there is a real need for states and local schools to do a better job of evaluating what they must do or change, if vocational education is to be more truly responsive to those it serves.
- Data collected in the states for federal reporting purposes are not in themselves useful for vocational education planning. There is a great need for states and local schools to have available more adequate planning and management information systems. There continues to be a general uncertainty about what kinds of data are most appropriate for comprehensive planning and how to use imperfect data that are available for planning new directions for vocational education.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the four themes for the National Center for Research in Vocational Education is that of increasing vocational education's responsiveness through comprehensive planning. Comprehensive planning is a requisite for improving the access to, performance, and benefits of vocational education for client groups, and for improving programs and services. Comprehensive planning requires (a) the application of appropriate and best available demographic, employment, and educational data; (b) the involvement of the broadest range of groups, agencies, institutions, and individuals concerned with vocational education and training; and (c) the application of the most appropriate planning practices, tools, and techniques.

The first section of this report, *The Context for Vocational Education Planning,* describes major legislative and environmental conditions that affect vocational education planning at the local level. The second section of this report, *The Realities of Local Level Vocational Education Planning,* summarizes (a) the nature of interagency coordinative/collaborative relationships in support of planning; (b) the ways in which data are used in local planning; (c) evaluation procedures used in local planning; and (d) local level planning processes. Suggestions for improving the technology of vocational education planning are included in this section of this report. The third section of the report, *Selected Issues in Vocational Education Planning,* identifies current major issues in vocational education planning and describes implications for vocational education administration and research. The last section, *Description of Procedures,* presents an overview of the procedures which served as a basis for the findings presented in this report.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEXT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING

The Legislative Context

Federally legislated planning requirements in vocational education began with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act. Planning requirements have become an increasingly visible aspect of vocational education legislation. This fact is especially evident in the most recent federal requirements for vocational education contained in the Education Amendments of 1976. These Amendments stress the need to improve vocational education planning in order for vocational education to be more responsive to the needs of individuals for job skills, to the needs of employers for trained workers, and to the vocational education needs of specially designated groups. The amendments also focus on promoting equal access to vocational education programs for both sexes.

The Education Amendments of 1976 direct the states to prepare and receive federal approval of five-year state plans for vocational education, annual program plans, and accountability reports as a condition for distributing federal vocational education funds to eligible local recipients. An integral part of the requirements for the distribution of federal funds is the need for state approval of local applications for the federal vocational education funds.

Figure 1 (see page 4), State Plan Elements and Relationships, outlines the substantive nature of the state plan documents. The Education Amendments of 1976 also prescribe which groups, institutions, and agencies must participate in the development of state plans, and mandate their particular responsibilities in this development.[2]

Looking at the federal legislative prescription as a framework for local vocational education planning, one notices several important characteristics:

- Coordination and consultation with other agencies and groups are considered as critical ingredients to reduce unwarranted duplication of program offerings and to make the best use of available resources.
- Data about the availability of jobs and about student and community needs are considered to be a necessary basis for determining programs and services to be offered.
- Evaluation findings are intended to be a vital ingredient of the local application process.
- The state plan for vocational education is presented as a working plan with goals that can be measured. Its provisions are intended to affect future plans and actions of both state and local educational units.

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[1] Harold Starr et al., *Developing State Plans for Vocational Education* (Columbus, Ohio: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1978), pp. 14-15.

[2] Ibid., pp. 18-35.

Figure 1

STATE PLAN ELEMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS

FIVE-YEAR STATE PLAN	ANNUAL PROGRAM PLAN	ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT
ASSURANCES Local Application Information. How Prioritizing of Local Applications is Determined. Policies and Procedures for: • Distribution of Funds • Public Disclosure • Use of Funds for Handicapped		
PROGRAM PROVISIONS Meet Employment Needs Assess Current and Future Needs for Workers. Establish Five-Year Goals in Terms of: • Instructional Programs • Programs by Level and by Type of Institution • Enrollments in These Programs • Federal, State, and Local Dollars Required • Other Goals (Optional) Describe Planned Uses of Funds for Meeting Goals for Each Fiscal Year.	**PROGRAM PROVISIONS** Meet Employment Needs Update Needs for Workers if Later or Better Data are Available. Update Goals if: • Later or Better Employment Data are Available • Different Level of Funding Becomes Available	**PROGRAM PROVISIONS** Meet Employment Needs Describe Extent to Which Goals Have Been Met.

Describe Planned Uses of Funds for Administration and Supervision for Each Fiscal Year.

Provide Rationale for Funding Decisions.

Meet Program Needs

Describe Uses of Funds for Each Fiscal Year for:

- Basic Grant Programs
- Program Improvement
- Special Programs for Disadvantaged
- Consumer/Homemaking Education Programs
- Rationale for Choosing These Uses
- Disadvantaged, Handicapped and Persons with Limited English-Speaking Ability in Accordance with Set-Asides and Matching Requirements

Describe Policies and Procedures to Assure Equal Access to Programs by Both Men and Women.

Describe Policies and Procedures for Vocational Education and CETA Coordination.

Meet Program Needs

Update Uses of Funds for Program Purposes if New Funding Level Available:

Describe How Uses of Funds Complies with Set-Asides, Matching and Maintenance of Effort Requirements.

Provide Breakdown of Distribution of Funds to Each Eligible Recipient.

Describe How Proposed Distribution Complies with Assurances.

Describe Results of Vocational Education and CETA Coordination.

Describe Results of Policies and Procedures to Assure Equal Access to Programs by Both Sexes.

Describe Results of Participation of Local Advisory Councils.

Meet Program Needs

Indicate Who Received Funds.

Describe Results Achieved.

Provide Summary of Evaluation of Programs Funded Under the Act.

Describe How Evaluation Results Were Used to Improve Programs.

Several other aspects of the planning framework, though not as obvious, are implied. For example, success of the state plan depends on the ability of the state division of vocational education to motivate the implementation of vocational education in local secondary and postsecondary schools. The framework assumes that the goals contained in state plans represent a consensus or reflect the collective viewpoints and intentions of local applicants. Finally, while the Education Amendments of 1976 detail the minimal contents to be included in local applications for federal funds, they do not explicitly refer to local planning as such; however, planning is implied.

The Environmental Context

Planning is a mandate of law for vocational educators. However, the environment in which vocational education operates has a great deal to do with the planning that takes place. From the fieldwork, and by review of other research, the study team has identified several key context conditions that affect local vocational education planning:

- There is extreme diversity in the organization, funding, philosophy, and goals among local institutions offering vocational education. This is true both within and among states. As a result, it is misleading to think of "a vocational education system."
- Although there are many federal regulations affecting vocational education, most of the key decisions with regard to the implementation of vocational education programs are made locally. The role of state divisions of vocational education is usually limited to consultation and technical assistance in many aspects of vocational education planning.
- The bulk of vocational education enrollment is in nonspecialized institutions—secondary and postsecondary schools—which offer both academic and occupational programs. Within these institutions, vocational administrators frequently function in staff roles, with varying degrees of authority over decisions about vocational education programs.
- Variations in the economic and demographic stability of communities affect the style of vocational education planning. Areas experiencing dynamic growth adopt different planning goals and activities than communities in more stable situations.

CHAPTER III

THE REALITIES OF LOCAL LEVEL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING

The study team visited a number of secondary and postsecondary schools that offer vocational education. Community-based organizations and other institutions and agencies concerned with vocational education and training were also visited by the study team. Numerous planning documents supplied by these schools, organizations, and agencies were reviewed by the study team. The visits and the document review served as the basis for the following summary of planning processes, data use, evaluation practices, and coordinative/collaborative relationships in support of local level vocational education planning.

Findings About Planning Processes at the Local Level

- Relatively few local schools have a long-range institutional plan for vocational education.
- Long-range vocational education planning, when it does take place, occurs most often in conjunction with facility planning.
- The local schools do engage in numerous vocational education planning activities. However, the planning that does take place is usually not found in a written planning document. As a consequence, the planning processes and procedures that do occur in local schools are seldom, or only partially, communicated to groups or individuals outside of the school.
- Local applications for federal funds received at the state level from secondary and postsecondary schools seldom contain sufficient detail to serve as planning documents. Indeed, it is usually difficult to discern the extent or nature of local level planning simply by reviewing local applications.
- Larger secondary and postsecondary schools are more likely to have formalized planning processes and policies and are more likely to have the resources to employ staff who have expertise in planning or research. It is important to recognize that many schools offering vocational education do not employ persons with specific expertise in planning or research.
- Decisions about vocational education programs and services in many schools are often made by persons who are not vocational administrators. In local secondary education agencies, planning decisions are often finalized by building principals or by district superintendents. In postsecondary institutions, planning decisions are often finalized by presidents of the institution rather than by deans of occupational/vocational education.
- Some kinds of planning activities are more likely to occur on a regular basis; other kinds of planning activities are likely to occur sporadically. Monitoring and assessing enrollment levels and student interest in vocational programs, and determining costs and expenditures are examples of instructional program planning activities that are usually conducted on a

regular basis. Planning instructional programs and services to meet the needs of special client groups (e.g., handicapped and disadvantaged) and to ensure equal access to vocational education by both sexes are more likely to occur on an irregular basis and then usually on a "felt-need" or externally induced basis. Systematic planning that includes needs assessments as a basis for providing instruction and services to special client groups or to promote equal access is the exception rather than the rule.

Findings About the Use of Data in Planning

- Published employment data are used more as a check to verify the validity of ideas for programs. Most program implementation ideas come from informal contacts with community members. For example, ideas for new programs often come from advisory committees, business persons, or teachers. Chambers of commerce and economic development agencies provide data about incoming industries and employer needs.
- Data about student interest in vocational education programs and data about enrollments and enrollment trends have a higher priority in local level instructional program planning than do employment data.
- The use of demographic data is generally limited to planning new facilities at the local level or to determining funding eligibility at the state level. Some postsecondary institutions analyze demographic trends to determine how to target future programming. Most institutions, however, have difficulty finding and applying data about the numbers and needs of special groups such as the handicapped, displaced homemakers, and limited-English proficient.
- Economic and financial data appear to be underutilized in vocational education planning.[2,3] When asked to describe the kinds of information used in vocational education planning, few vocational administrators mentioned cost data. Those who did came from institutions that are highly dependent on local funding rather than on state aid, or from institutions that are having financial problems.
- When published data are used in vocational education planning, those data gathered from local sources are felt to be more useful for planning purposes than published data received from state agencies. Vocational educators feel that locally generated information is more current and more adequately reflect their needs than state-generated data. This is particulary true of employment data.
- Reservations about, or problems with data are cited primarily with reference to employment data. Vocational educators feel that substate data provided by state employment security agencies are lacking in sufficient geographic and occupational detail. In addition, it also is difficult for many vocational administrators in local schools to accept the accuracy of current and projected employment data which are available to them from state divisions of vocational education.

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[3]Alan Woodruff, *National Study of Vocational Education Systems and Facilities,* No. I (Silver Spring, MD: Institutional Development Associates, 1978), p. 165.

[4]Harold Starr et al., *Management Information Systems for Vocational Education: A National Study* (Columbus, OH: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1977).

- Reliable occupational supply information is particularly hard to obtain. It is difficult for many secondary and postsecondary school administrators to predict in a reasonably accurate way just how many vocational students will actually enter the job market seeking a position related to their training. Furthermore, the output from other sectors (e.g., on-the-job training, in-migration of workers, proprietary schools, higher education programs, and so forth) is uncertain or unavailable on a regular, continuing basis.

Typical sources of data which were noted by the study team as being used in local level vocational education planning are listed in figure 2.

Findings About Evaluation Practices Used for Local Planning

- Local schools evaluate educational processes and practices, program outcomes, and operations. Many smaller schools were observed by the study team to restrict their evaluation efforts to assessments of teacher performance, and to taking part in infrequently occurring state-initiated program reviews and evaluations by regional accrediting agencies.
- The study team found that process evaluations do result in changes in facilities, equipment, curriculum content, and staffing at the local level.
- Local vocational staff support the state-initiated program review process that is the primary tool used at the local level for process evaluation purposes. Local administrators feel that process evaluations help them to understand the requirements for quality vocational programs.
- Evaluations of instructional program outcomes typically focus on initial placement experiences and subsequent employment experiences of program completers. These kinds of data are now available in the vast majority of local schools visited by the study team. Data about placement and employment experiences contribute to decisions about continuing, deleting, or modifying existing vocational programs. However, placement and employment data are rarely key factors in making such decisions. For example, most program deletions reported to the study team had occurred as a result of declining program enrollments and a lack of student interest in these programs. Some of these programs offered poor employment prospects, but others had been successfully placing graduates. There are other reasons that limit the usefulness of placement data in the process of making instructional program decisions. It is very difficult to accurately interpret placement rates. For example, is 60 percent placement a poor rate for an inner-city school in an area with 12 percent unemployment, or is 80 percent placement good for a highly selective area school in a region with 4 percent unemployment? Vocational educators do not have any consistent basis for making such judgments. They feel that excessive reliance on placement data will thwart their efforts to serve more disadvantaged, handicapped, and nontraditional students who will be harder to place. There is also a question in interpreting what is an appropriate or acceptable level of training-related placement given the diverse conditions under which different schools operate vocational education. The conditions include, as examples, the characteristics and abilities of program completers, the extent of general unemployment, and wage levels offered in alternative jobs.
- A serious concern of administrators about evaluation activities is the burden it places on local school resources in terms of staff time and dollar costs. One former administrator of a large metropolitan school district reported to the study team that the annual follow-up survey cost

FIGURE 2

TYPICAL SOURCES OF DATA FOUND TO BE USED FOR LOCAL PLANNING PURPOSES

Type of Information	*Planning Purposes*	*Sources of Data*
Employment (current and future needs for workers)	Making decisions about instructional program mix	• State and local employment security offices • *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (U.S. Department of Labor) • School-initiated surveys of businesses and industry • Chambers of commerce • Newspapers (want-ads) • Local advisory councils and craft committees. • Community leaders, teachers
Demographic	Planning for new facilities	• U.S. Bureau of Census reports of population characteristics • Regional planning commissions, data about housing patterns, community growth trends, and so forth • Personal knowledge of administrators or input from local advisory councils about in- or out-migration of industries • Local community organizations for information about needs of special populations, advice on potential impact of new facilities on tax rates, environment, and so on

FIGURE 2
(continued)

Typical Sources of Data Found to be Used for Local Planning Purposes

Type of Information	*Planning Purposes*	*Sources of Data*
Economic	Making decisions about instructional program mix; planning new facilities; planning allocation of resources (staff and dollars)	• Estimates of local and state funds potentially available to support programs • Estimates of income from tuition (postsecondary level) • Estimates of facility and equipment costs • Current expenditure data for programs
Educational	Making decisions about instructional program mix; planning new facilities; planning instructional program support services	• Advice from educators and community leaders based on their special interests and educational philosophies • Current enrollments in existing programs • Student interest surveys • Experience and/or data about placement rates of program completers • Personnel files (teacher availability, credentials, tenure status, salaries, and so on)

NOTE: For a listing of kinds of data potentially useful for vocational education planning purposes, see Harold Starr et al., *Selecting, Analyzing, and Displaying Planning Information* (Columbus, OH: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1979), pp. 107–128.

his institution an estimated $150,000. The increased time and cost of mandated evaluations have occurred at a time when the real dollar level of federal spending on vocational education has decreased.

- A general shortcoming of evaluations conducted at the local level is that they rarely deal with "big picture" questions such as—
  - What unmet needs exist?
  - How can the vocational education system become more responsive to student and employer needs?
  - What courses and programs should be taught?
  - To what extent does the total program of vocational education meet the needs of all students?
  - How can service to various segments of the student body be improved?
  - Are institutions of vocational education providing for the needs of various groups and age levels in the community?
  - Are decisions about the level and length of vocational education programs made on a consistent and rational basis?

Current evaluation practices at the local level typically focus almost exclusively on improving the quality of current instructional programs and services instead of providing data for deciding what might be done to improve the responsiveness of vocational education to its client groups.

Findings About Coordination and Collaboration for Planning

- Coordination and collaboration among vocational education agencies, and between these agencies and CETA prime sponsors, community-based organizations (e.g., community action agencies, Urban League, Opportunities Industrialization Centers)[5] and other job training agencies focus on reducing unwarranted duplication of programs and sharing curricula, facilities, and teachers. The study team did not find many instances of joint planning of future directions to better serve client groups.
- Vocational education and CETA legislation have been important in extending or formalizing the mechanics of local level coordinative and collaborative relationships for planning purposes. In some localities, locally initiated coordinative and collaborative relationships among vocational education, public and private job training agencies, and community-based organizations have existed prior to federal legislative mandates for interagency coordination.
- Effective coordination and collaboration are enhanced when there are commonalities in agencies' purposes, philosophies, and administrative policies. Differences in these factors, as well as differences in funding procedures and budget cycles, create impediments to effective interagency coordination and collaboration.

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[5]Note: The study team found that many vocational educators are unfamiliar with the part played by community-based organizations (CBOs) in the preparation of people for employment. Therefore, a supplement to this report which describes the role of CBOs has been prepared. It is titled *Building Partnerships—CBOs, CETA, and Vocational Education.*

- Coordinative and collaborative relationships among vocational education and other agencies are seldom implemented and operated in a systematic, planned, or well-supported manner.

A more complete understanding of the nature of coordination and collaboration in vocational education can be found in a recent National Center publication.[6]

[6]Harold Starr et al., *Coordination in Vocational Education Planning: Barriers and Facilitators* (Columbus, OH: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1980). 94 pp.

CHAPTER IV

IMPROVING THE TECHNOLOGY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING

This section of the report lists a sample of planning tools and techniques, and training materials and activities that might be useful for improving local level vocational education planning and for capacitating the current planning skills of many local vocational education administrators. The sample of planning tools and techniques, and training material and activities that are listed were derived by examining discrepancies between federal legislative intent for vocational education planning and the observed realities of local level vocational education planning as it takes place under diverse environmental context conditions.

Suggestions for Planning Tools and Techniques

- Models and procedural guides are needed to assist local school administrators/planners to develop multiyear institutional plans for vocational education. Alfred[7] and Van Ausdle[8] have each proposed a model for doing multiyear institutional planning for vocational education. These two proposed models were developed for use by local postsecondary institutions, and both models emphasize the integration of vocational and academic program planning. Alfred gives special emphasis to the need for involving all institutional staff in the development of multiyear planning who will be affected by such planning. He sees such involvement as critical to effective implementation of planning efforts. It is reasonable to conclude that different models for multiyear, local level vocational education planning might need to be formulated, given the differences in the kinds of local schools which offer vocational education (e.g., specialized, nonspecialized secondary, postsecondary, large, small, rural, urban) and the diverse environmental context under which such schools operate.

- Models and procedural guides are needed to assist local schools and other local agencies concerned with training persons for employment to organize and implement local and regional arrangements for coordination and collaboration to do joint planning for common purposes (e.g., providing for the needs of handicapped persons for job skills and job placement), and to make the best use of available resources for vocational education.

- Models and procedural guides are needed to enable a state division of vocational education to organize and implement statewide coordinative and collaborative arrangements among the state office, local schools, and other agencies to formulate and update state plans for vocational education. These models should (a) provide a sense of a statewide direction and

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[7]Richard L. Alfred, "Planning and Evaluating Vocational Education Programs in the 1980s" (Working paper prepared for The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Columbus, OH, 1980).

[8]Steven L. Van Ausdle, *Comprehensive Institution Planning in Two-Year Colleges: A Planning Process and Case Study* (Columbus, OH: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1979).

perspective to the planning done by local schools; and (b) create a climate for joint state and local planning to make the best use of available resources and achieve commonly shared objectives for vocational education and training.

- Techniques and procedures are needed to enable local vocational education administrators and planners to define new and emerging skills which are, or will be, needed by workers because of changing technologies. Baker[9] has outlined a procedure to assess the possible effects of the microelectronics revolution on vocational education. The procedure uses a Delphi process involving experts in the microelectronics field and the procedure is intended to be generalizable to other occupational areas.

- Planning information systems for vocational education need to be developed for use by local schools. Such systems need to incorporate a variety of data that are pertinent for local planning and evaluation purposes. Alternative ways of systematically generating and analyzing data to produce planning to meet the requirements of schools operating under different environmental context conditions also need to be developed. Although many schools currently operate (more or less sophisticated) management information systems (MIS), these MIS are typically intended to support monitoring and reporting functions rather than planning (and evaluation) purposes.

Needs for Training Materials to Enhance Planning Skills

- There is a need for training materials that can be used to:
  - enhance the existing planning skills of vocational education administrators;
  - enhance current understandings by local vocational administrators and planners of how vocational education is affected by the political context in which it operates;
  - acquaint vocational administrators and planners with techniques that can be used for interacting with political decision makers to secure their support for vocational education;
  - inform vocational administrators and planners about data sources, selection, analysis, display, and application techniques that are appropriate for vocational education planning in a variety of environmental and educational contexts.

[9]David E. Baker, "Implications of the Micro-Electronics Revolution for Vocational Education Planning" (Working paper prepared for the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Columbus, OH: 1980).

CHAPTER V

SELECTED ISSUES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING

Five basic issues in vocational education planning were identified by the study team on the basis of its fieldwork. This section of the report contains a description of each of these issues, including key findings from fieldwork, and implications for research and administration.

Issue I

Preparation for specific available jobs should/should not be the major basis for planning vocational education (program, enrollment, and funding) goals.

Discussion

Preparation for specific available jobs is one of the major tenets of the philosophy of vocational education. Current legislation stresses that vocational education should train appropriate numbers of students to fill gaps between supply and demand for workers. Advocates of this approach maintain that it will avoid overtraining and unwarranted duplication of programs. However, vocational administrators recognize that employment supply/demand data are only one of several kinds of data that need to be considered in planning programs, given the realities of the context in which vocational education programs are implemented and operated.

For example, vocational education administrators do use labor market/supply-demand data when planning customized training programs for particular companies or specific industries. Such data are used to develop programs to match immediate needs for specific numbers and types of workers. Vocational educators do not, however, plan for most programs purely on the basis that *x* number of workers per year are required for industry *y*.

Schools cannot implement and operate vocational education programs without a sufficient number of students, even if employment opportunities are exceptional. In many states, funding for programs is based on full-time equivalent enrollments (FTEs) or head counts. Therefore, student interest and funding play a strong role in vocational education program planning. Very small secondary schools, especially in rural areas, and schools in nonindustrialized areas cannot usually afford to offer many vocational programs or change existing programs to meet specific new or changing job opportunities. They, therefore, must opt to serve, over time, the greatest number of students of diverse abilities in programs which will be of interest to them, and assume that employment and

employability skills acquired will be transferable across a range of jobs potentially available to them. Larger, comprehensive secondary school systems, postsecondary institutions, and specialized secondary and postsecondary vocational education schools, on the other hand, can and often do make specific job preparation for available jobs their major priority in program planning.

Planning programs to prepare persons for specific available jobs requires the existence and application of adequate employment data in the planning process. The study team found most of the vocational education administrators it dealt with to be dissatisfied with the usefulness of the published employment projections data available to them. The data that are available can often be used to justify existing programs. However, employment data which can assist decision making for new program directions continue to be especially difficult to obtain.

Implications

The federal framework for vocational education planning emphasizes preparation for specific available jobs and mandates better use of employment data. A measure of the effectiveness of vocational education planning in federal legislation is the extent to which students are placed in training related jobs and employers are satisfied with their training and performance.

In the realities of vocational education, student/community interest, funding formulas, the number and quality of ongoing programs, and other conditions are, or should be, also considered in program planning. In addition, educational and demographic contexts within which programs are implemented also influence the priority and importance attached to the various factors in the planning process.

State and local vocational education administrators need to be more explicit about the actual rationale for program decisions, and need to communicate such rationale much more effectively than is being done to date. The accountability and success of vocational education will continue to be clouded and uncertain, if schools and state divisions continue to act as if program decisions are made almost exclusively in compliance with the federal legislative mandate for specific job preparation, when in fact they are not.

Issue II

The federally mandated state plan for vocational education planning does/does not serve as an adequate planning document for state vocational education agencies and local schools.

Discussion

The state plan for vocational education is developed at the state level. The planned goals for vocational education and the rationale for them are likewise developed at the state level. The states' needs for programs, for enrollments, and for services are needs as perceived from a state agency perspective. Implementation of the state plan is carried out by local schools which typically have only a minimum involvement in the plan's development, and no accountability or responsibility for its implementation.

In reality, the state plan for vocational education is a report by the states to the federal government about the intended uses of federal funds. It is not a real planning document, and its contents are not binding on local schools.

The goals reported in the state plan cannot be achieved without the cooperation of local schools which must implement them. The basis for program and enrollment goals in the state plan is primarily labor market need. In many instances, the bases for implementing local programs are primarily student and community interest or the presence of tenured teachers.

Local funding ability also affects decisions about starting or changing programs. Federal funds represent only a small fraction of the total funds used to support local vocational programming. As a result, state divisions of vocational education do not usually have sufficient dollar incentives available to motivate locally autonomous schools to implement the state plan goals. The result is that the state plan serves as a report to the federal government about the intended (wished-for) use of federal funds. It does not serve as a functional plan binding either the state or local level.

Implications

There is a need to examine different frameworks which could serve as the basis for developing functional state plans for vocational education. Since the current federal-state plan format does not seem to be an adequate basis for a functional state plan, alternative planning schemes must be formulated. In addition, there should be some effort to integrate state level vocational plans with some of the other fifteen to twenty state plans required by other federal legislation from state education agencies.

Federal and state level decision makers should pay more attention to the need for incentives for influencing the behavior of local units. Because of local autonomy, schools must have rewards if they are to accept goals and plans originating from a regional or statewide level.

Issue III

The mechanisms for coordination prescribed in the federal law do/do not improve vocational education planning.

Discussion

Vocational education has established coordinative relationships, both within and outside of education. These relationships have improved the articulated delivery of vocational education. Mutual awareness among organizations has increased as a result, and dollars have been saved through sharing of curriculum and facilities.

However, the coordination which has been created lacks depth. Collaborative long-range planning rarely occurs. Most of the shared activities focus on coordinating current programs and services, not on mutual planning and charting future courses of action.

To be effective, coordination depends on common goals among organizations and benefits to each organization. Institutions competing for programs and students see each other as threats and are unlikely to welcome coordination. On the other hand, institutions that teach students of different ages and that have different programs may not have enough in common to see benefits from coordination. In each of these situations, additional incentives are needed to elicit effective coordination for planning purposes. Federal legislation and most state policies do not provide sufficient incentives to encourage organizations to engage in collaborative, in-depth planning.

State divisions of vocational education have a potential for fostering effective coordination among local secondary schools. However, in several states visited by the study team, conflict between state agencies responsible for secondary and postsecondary vocational education resulted in coordination problems among local secondary and postsecondary institutions. In one such situation, a secondary school and a junior college "kept quiet" about their good relationship so others in the state would not be upset about it.

Another characteristic of coordination is that it is most successful when it occurs in a well-planned manner. Organizations with the most extensive and productive relationships had assigned staff and time toward furthering these relationships. Many schools, however, do not approach coordination in such an organized fashion. There is a general lack of understanding of mechanisms which can develop effective collaboration and the benefits possible from collaboration in planning.

Implications

Federal legislation mandates numerous mechanics for coordination among agencies in the development of state plans. Mandates for coordination tend to produce compliance behavior or shallow interaction. Greater incentives are necessary to encourage organizations to share ideas and plans. State divisions of voational education have a potential leadership role in providing cross-fertilization of ideas among local units and in promoting coordinative/collaborative relationships needed for comprehensive statewide planning. In general, there is a need for research to determine best ways to establish, implement, and evaluate a statewide plan for coordination, and to improve the relationship of vocational education to other education and training components.

Issue IV

A wide range of demographic, economic, and employment information is/is not used in vocational education planning.

Discussion

Vocational educators use both published data and information gained from personal contacts in their planning. Most institutions visited by the study team scan the local labor market periodically, either by input from their advisory committees or by local surveys of industry. By personal contact with chamber of commerce representatives or local industries, they obtain news of companies entering or leaving the area.

Published employment data are used more often as a check to verify the validity of ideas for programs. Most program implementation ideas come from informal contacts with community members.

The use of demographic data is generally limited to planning new facilities or to determining funding eligibility at the state level. Some postsecondary institutions analyze demographic trends to determine how to target future programming. Most institutions, however, have difficulty finding and applying information about the numbers and needs of special groups such as the handicapped, displaced

homemakers, limited-English proficient, and so forth. For example, one state is conducting the first statewide survey of the in-school developmentally disabled. Before the survey, planning for that population depended on estimates and guesswork.

Economic and financial data appear to be underutilized in vocational education planning.[10, 11] When asked by the study team what information was used in planning programs, new vocational administrators mentioned cost data. Those who did came from institutions that are highly dependent on local funding rather than on state aid, or from institutions that are having financial problems.

Implications

Vocational education planning requires a wide range of data, both qualitative (judgments and impressions) and quantitative. Planning requires the ability to draw together and systematically use qualitative and quantitative data obtained from a variety of sources.

There is a need to develop planning and management information systems. There is also a need for research into how vocational administrators might make more effective use of imperfect information available to them for vocational education planning, such as employment data that are seemingly contradictory (e.g., differences between local employer surveys and state agencies' estimates of employment).

Issue V

The federal thrust for evaluation of program effectiveness and program improvement has/has not resulted in evaluation information being used in the planning process.

Discussion

Evaluation as promoted by the federal legislation has two aspects:

- Evaluation of processes and program operations
- Evaluation of outcomes or results of vocational education

Evidence observed by the study team shows that the process evaluation has resulted in changes in facilities, equipment, curriculum content, and staffing. Local vocational staff have generally supportive attitudes toward the state program review process, which is the primary tool for process evaluation. They feel that the evaluation helps decision makers in their institutions to understand the requirements for quality vocational programs. However, the program improvement evaluation has focused largely on tangibles—facilities, square footage, equipment. It has not focused deeply on qualitative aspects of teaching styles or students' development of skills. Similarly, a general shortcoming of both the process and the outcome evaluation is that they rarely deal with "big picture" questions such as the following:

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[10] Alan Woodruff, *National Study of Vocational Education Systems and Facilities* Vol. I (Silver Spring, Maryland: Institutional Development Associates, 1978), p. 165.

[11] Harold Starr et al., *Management Information Systems for Vocational Education: A National Study* (Columbus, Ohio: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1977).

- What unmet needs exist?
- How can the vocational education system become more responsive to student and employer needs?
- What courses and programs *should* be taught?
- To what extent does the total program of vocational education meet the needs of all students? Or, how can service to various segments of the student body be improved?
- Are institutions of vocational education providing for the needs of various groups and age levels in the community? Are decisions about the level and course length of vocational education made on a consistent and rational basis?

In other words, evaluations tend to give more emphasis to current programs and services instead of what could or should be happening.

Program outcome information, especially data on student employment rates, is now available in the vast majority of institutions. Placement information contributes to decisions about vocational programs. However, placement is rarely a key factor. For example, most program terminations noted by the study team had occurred as a result of declining program enrollments. Some of these programs offered poor employment prospects, but others had been successfully placing graduates. Enrollments and student interest are the overriding factors which influence the mix of programs and services.

There are other, more technical reasons that limit the impact of placement rates on decision making. First, the interpretation of placement rates is uncertain. Is 60 percent a poor rate for an inner-city school in an area with 12 percent unemployment, or is 80 percent placement good for a highly selective area school in a region with 4 percent unemployment? Vocational educators do not have any consistent basis for making such judgments. They feel that excessive reliance on placements will thwart their efforts to serve more disadvantaged, handicapped, and nontraditional students, who will be harder to place.

If a vocational program has a large number of enrollees who have chosen vocational education as an elective, or who do not specifically plan on that particular career, the rate of training-related placement may not be an accurate indicator of the impact of the program. According to national statistics,[12] there are 5,000,000 secondary-level occupational students representing 3,000,000 full-time equivalents. About 1,400,000 students complete programs every year. Of that number, only 700,000 are available for employment upon graduation, and 400,000 actually obtain training-related employment.[13] The experience of those 400,000 may not be representative of the total impact of vocational education on the total 5,000,000 students.

Another concern about evaluation activities and information gathering is the burden they place on organizations. The time and cost of evaluation were the major concerns reported by state and local staff. For example, in one state the five-year program review was estimated to consume about one-fourth of the working time of state program supervisors. One former administrator of a large metropolitan school district reported that the annual follow-up survey cost his institution an estimated $150,000. The increased time and cost of mandated evaluation procedures has occurred at a time when the real dollar level of federal spending on vocational education has decreased.

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[12] *The Vocational Education Study: The Interim Report* (Washington, D.C.: The National Institute for Education, 1980). pp. VI 3-5.

[13] *The Status of Vocational Education: School Year 1976-77* (Columbus, Ohio: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1979), pp. 139-142.

Implications

Federally mandated evaluation activities have had an impact on vocational education planning, but not to the extent desired by policy makers. Typically, evaluations look at how to improve what exists, instead of at discrepancies between what is and what ought to be. There is a need for more clarity in interpreting placement and other outcomes of vocational education. Vocational educators should not be labeled irresponsible because placement rates seem to have relatively little impact on program decisions.

Comprehensive evaluation which answers the "big picture" questions is costly and time-consuming. Inadequate resource levels to support such evaluation and a lack of tested evaluation processes which focus on analysis of needs have frustrated state and local administrators. Perfunctory evaluations that stress compliance will continue to flourish unless this situation improves.

CHAPTER VI

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

This section of the report presents an overview of procedures used to produce the findings contained in *Coordination in Vocational Education Planning: Barriers and Facilitators,* and the present report, *Conditions Affecting Vocational Education Planning.*

The report dealing with coordination in vocational education planning resulted from research carried out during 1979. The present report resulted from research carried out during 1980. The 1980 research represents an effort to verify and extend the 1979 findings about coordination in vocational education planning, and about the process and practices of vocational education planning.

Coordination in Vocational Education Planning: Barriers and Facilitators

This study served as a basis for the current research effort and focused on the process of coordination that results in a statewide vocational education plan.[15] Such a plan represents a negotiation, accommodation, and integration of all the diverse interests and concerns of agencies and individuals involved in the future and direction of vocational education.

The establishment of effective coordinative relationships is an essential component of vocational education planning. This study described numerous ways to facilitate coordinative relationships. The examples that were described were found in the literature or were suggested by persons who are currently involved in coordination activities in support of vocational education planning.

Also identified were barriers to effective coordinative relationships for vocational education planning purposes. The reported barriers represented those that seemed to be common across the states participating in the research effort and that seemed to be most important in impeding effective coordination in planning.

Lack of direction and uncertainties about roles and responsibilities for coordination in support of statewide vocational education planning, the compliance orientation toward planning, excess specificity in legislation, restrictive funding, burdens associated with the collection and transmission of data, conflicting definitions and labeling of special populations, differences in planning cycles and scheduling, differences in organizational objectives, and the influences of environmental conditions surrounding vocational education planning were some of the major barriers identified as impeding effective coordination in vocational education planning at the local level, at the state level, and between local and state levels. These barriers and their effects upon coordination were described in an attempt to provide a better understanding of the current state of coordination in vocational education planning.

Overview of Procedures

The basic procedures for this research effort involved developing and implementing procedures to obtain pertinent information about coordination in vocational education planning, and developing and implementing procedures to analyze and synthesize the document reviews and information obtained from dialogues in the cooperating field site states. The procedures used to select field site states, obtain pertinent data, and analyze and synthesize these data to produce the report are outlined below.

Selecting Field Site States

Eight states were selected, using six specific selection criteria. The six criteria were intended to assure that states of varying characteristics were represented. The six selection criteria are described as follows:

- *Governance Structure:* Addresses the location of the state division of vocational education (SDVE) in the education administrative system of the state. This criterion

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[15]Note: For operational definitions of coordination and vocational education planning used in this study and the study described in section II, see *Coordination in Vocational Education: Barriers and Facilitators,* pp. 3, 28-31.

was concerned with whether the state agency responsible for vocational education is an independent body or whether it is within the state department of education. Further, if it was in the state department of education, there was concern for its relative location within the administrative hierarchy.

- *Number and Characteristics of Local Education Agencies (LEAs):* Reflects the concern for the relative number of LEAs in the state, the characteristics of those LEAs in terms of size, whether they were rural or urban, and their economic base.
- *Geographic Distribution of LEAs:* Was concerned with the geographic density of LEAs within the state.
- *Degree of Industrialization of the State or LEAs:* Was a concern since industrialization may promote a dynamism in the labor market and increase the need for coordination in planning vocational education.
- *Planning Capabilities of State Divisions of Vocational Education:* Was concerned with the extent to which a formal attempt is made to rationally plan vocational education. This was a concern since there are varying levels of planning capabilities across states, and differences may give rise to different kinds of barriers and facilitators to coordination.
- *Emphasis on Evaluation:* The evaluation function is integral to effective planning in vocational education. It was necessary to represent different levels of emphasis given to coordination in doing evaluation activities.

A list of candidate states was prioritized using the six criteria, and the following states were selected as field site states: Florida, Wisconsin, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, Georgia, and West Virginia.

Each of the eight state divisions of vocational education selected a staff person to coordinate project activities within the state.

Obtaining Pertinent Information

Two mutually supportive strategies were used to collect information about coordination in planning vocational education. These were document reviews and guided dialogues.

Prior to conducting dialogues in the states a variety of pertinent documents were collected from each state. The selection of these documents was based on the relevance of their content for several purposes including the following:

- Gaining familiarity with the vocational education system in each state in order to understand the context for coordination
- Developing acquaintance with the governance structures for vocational education in each state
- Acquiring specific examples of facilitative mechanisms to coordination or examples which indicate successful or unsuccessful attempts to coordinate, and
- Identifying potential avenues for acquiring further information.

A sample list of documents from two states appears in Appendix A.

The review of these documents, in addition to providing valuable information in preparation for the interviews, functioned as a preassessment of planning and coordination in each state. As a result, each interviewer went into the dialogue situation with an informed awareness of vocational education operations and concerns in the respective state.

Immediately after receiving documents from the states, the documents were cataloged, filed, and prepared for data abstraction. Preparation for data abstraction required the development of recording sheets for recording abstracted data. Six types of recording sheets were developed and instructions for using these recording sheets were prepared. The title and focus of each recording sheet are listed in figure 3.

Preparing for the dialogues required several preparatory activities. These activities included: (a) the selection of interviewers and interviewees; (b) reviewing materials in preparation for the dialogues; and (c) preparing a topical outline to guide dialogue discussion. These are briefly discussed in the following paragraph.

Using specific criteria supplied by the project for guidance, field site coordinators selected a variety of persons to be interviewed. At the state level there were three kinds of individuals to be represented. The first group included individuals who were knowledgeable about, or who were working with information necessary to make planning decisions. These individuals included:

- Individuals who were responsible for the preparation of the state's vocational education plan, or individuals who were responsible for the preparation of state vocational education budgets
- Individuals whose assignments bridged the gap between state and local agencies in the area of planning, and
- Individuals who were responsible for obtaining information relative to state plan preparation

The next group of individuals were those functioning outside the state department of vocational education who represented groups at the state level that are immediately concerned with vocational education operations. These individuals included:

- Representatives of the state advisory council for vocational education (SACVE)
- Representatives of the state occupational coordinating committee (SOICC)
- Members of the state plan group, and
- Representatives of the state board of education; representatives from the state agency for community colleges; and representatives of regional education, human resource training groups (e.g., CETA), and the state employment services office

A similar set of criteria was used to select interviewees at the local level. Application of the criteria for the selection of interviewees resulted in nearly 400 persons being selected by the field site coordinators in the eight states.

The project team conducting the dialogues usually was comprised of at least three persons: a representative from the National Center assigned to the project; the field site coordinator from a state other than the one in which the interviews were being conducted; and a consultant interviewer from the state in which the interviews were conducted. Each performed a specific function on the

FIGURE 3

Recording Sheets

Focus of Recording Sheets	Information Recorded on Sheet
Facilitators to Coordination	Facilitators to coordination Type of facilitation Functional areas or activities affected
Concern for Coordination	Descriptive phrase reflecting concern Intended action to address concern Comments about concern, e.g., source of statement, persons involved
Planning or Coordination-related Barriers, Problems, or Constraints	Planning or coordination related barriers, problems, or constraints Type of barrier, constraint, or problem Functional areas/activities affected
Planning Activities	Planning activities Decision-focus of planning activity Evidence of coordination to accomplish data planning activity.
Planning Concerns	Planning concern Decision-focus of each concern Need for coordination to address each concern
Coordination Patterns	Coordination with whom, by whom Comments on the purpose and nature of coordination Classification of coordination into categories; interunit, interagency, or between state and local agencies

interview team. The project representative from the National Center served as team leader and controlled the direction of the dialogue. The field site coordinators used the experience acquired in their own states as a base for eliciting relevant information; while in-state consultant interviewers joined the discussion to clarify responses and ask follow-up questions based on their experiences in the state. The consultant interviewers were persons who were familiar to the interviewees and their presence contributed to a relaxed atmosphere in the interview situation. However, before the data collection strategies could actually be implemented, extensive preparations were made.

For each type of person interviewed an outline of topics for a dialogue discussion was prepared. The outline addressed anticipated responses and potential areas for probing. The outline was specifically for the use of the interviewers and was tailored to fit the experiences of the interviewees and the content of the abstracted documents. The topical outlines were developed from a review of the documents previously obtained from each state. The document reviews required reading documents to identify pertinent information, recording this information according to prescribed guidelines, cross-checking the categorization of information with other members of the project staff to ensure commonalities of perspectives, and filing the abstracted information by state name and title of the respective recording forms. The abstracted information was used to prepare for the interviews and was then stored for later data synthesis purposes.

The data collection via dialogues required the following five activities: predialogue briefings for interviews; postdialogue discussions among interviewers; comparing information across dialogue sessions in each state; comparing dialogue information with data acquired from other sources; and recording and transcribing the dialogues.

Analyzing and Synthesizing Data

The interview dialogues were recorded by hand in two states and on cassette tapes in six states. The recorded dialogues were later synthesized. The end result was an abundance of data from the states pertaining to barriers and facilitators to coordination in planning vocational education, and data about a wide range of vocational education planning problems and concerns.

The data transcripts were used to develop terse statements representing the coordination barriers and facilitators elicited, and to summarize the planning activities, problems, and concerns that were raised in the dialogues. This information was placed into pertinent and explanatory categories for reporting purposes. In order to reflect the appropriate context, however, these facts had to be accompanied by information that showed the limitations and exceptions of the data. The dialogue data were then combined with the data obtained from document reviews to more adequately reflect the barriers and facilitators to coordination in vocational education planning.

Conditions Affecting Vocational Education Planning

Overview of Procedures

In the preceding year's effort conclusions about coordination in vocational education planning and about planning practices and issues were principally derived from opinions and judgments of a cross-section of persons involved with, or concerned about, the delivery of vocational education. This year it was decided that in order to verify and extend last year's findings, it was necessary to develop a somewhat different approach to deriving findings about vocational education planning. This year the approach focused on seeking more direct evidence that could support the previous year's findings about vocational education planning. In this instance, evidence was to be established from planning documentation and from detailed and credible descriptions from persons with vocational education planning, advisory, and supportive responsibilities.

The procedures used to identify key issues and areas of planning, establish logistical arrangements, collect data in the field, and analyze and synthesize these data to produce the research findings are described below.

Identification of Key Issues and Areas of Planning

The specification of the domain of inquiry was the first task that the project team faced. Basically, the aim of the study was to identify and describe local-level practices for planning and evaluation of vocational education programs, and to clarify key issues for research and administration that are posed by analysis of current practices. In essence, the study had both a descriptive and a normative thrust. The descriptive thrust embodied an observational analysis while the normative thrust required issue analysis.

The potential scope of the study was thus very broad: examination of planning processes, information utilization, and evaluation activities. However, the 1979 findings served to narrow the kinds of observations and issues that were ultimately selected for analysis.

In the previous year, the study team had identified six functional areas of planning. These function/areas are enumerated and described as:

- *Resource Allocation:* The distribution of resources among competing users
- *Resource Acquisition:* Obtaining resources to maintain effective system operations
- *Determining Instruction Program Mix:* Determining the adequate mix of programs to meet the needs of clients within the constraints of limited resources and legislative requirements. Operationally, this function addresses the process used to determine what programs will be added, deleted, or continued
- *Program Improvement and Maintenance:* Procedures for modifying programs to maintain or improve their adequacy and relevance
- *Instructional Supportive Services:* Determining the noninstructional services provided to students to enable them to satisfactorily complete vocational programs and obtain employment (e.g., guidance, counseling, placement, tutorial services)

- *System Maintenance and Support:* Ensuring the satisfactory operation of the administrative, instructional, and physical environments. This function addresses the activities and considerations needed to ensure continued operation of, and support for, the vocational education system.

Because of resource and time constraints, the study team did not deem it advisable to fully investigate all of the six functional areas in depth. To delimit the scope of investigation, it was decided to place greatest emphasis on two functional areas: determining instructional program mix and program improvement and maintenance. Also, the study team determined that the selection of topics for inquiry would depend to a certain extent on the circumstances surrounding each institution to be visited. Rather than attempting to collect a complete set of information on all six functions or activities, the team visiting any particular institution would focus on these planning operations in which the administrator had been most active or recently involved. For example, there would not be much sense in going over program mix planning at an institution that had maintained the same programs and courses for twenty-five years. Forcing administrators to discuss activities minimal or nonexistent at these institutions would tend to introduce bias.

The next task consisted of specifying topical areas of planning to be researched. On the basis of the 1979 findings, the study staff identified five different topical areas of planning for investigation. The topical areas were: planning process and context concerns; information utilization; evaluation practices; interagency coordination linkages and relationships; and planning for special populations.

An information-gathering approach was then developed for determining evidence about planning processes and procedures actually used in the local areas visited. To accomplish this, staff reviewed summary findings from the 1979 effort, examined state and local planning documents, and read research reports on vocational education planning and related areas. Appendix B lists a sample of documents secured from local schools.

Then, procedures were designed for collecting observations about the five topical areas in the field site states. An important component of this design was the formulation of a procedure to collect data about each topical area and then to integrate the observational requirements into one overall approach. It was decided that an open-ended discussion format could be used to determine the planning operations of a local vocational education institution. Because of time constraints, it would be impractical to conduct five separate strands of information gathering in a local institution. The resulting process was designed to account for the type of staff (and their functions) that would be encountered in vocational education institutions. This process was tested by having staff role-play various levels of vocational education staff and observing their reactions and responses to the open-ended discussion format. Through several iterations, the format was revised and brought to a final form. The subsection on information collection describes the application and utilization of this technique in the field.

Establishment of Logistical Arrangements

Four of the eight states participating in the study of coordination in vocational education planning were invited and agreed to participate in the current study. These states were Florida, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma.

For the purposes of the study, local areas within each state needed to be selected for intensive visitation. These local areas were chosen on recommendation of the respective state division staff according to certain criteria. The local area would have to contain an appropriate mix of secondary

TABLE 1

Categories of Persons Participating in Dialogue Sessions

Category	*State*				*Total*
	WI	OK	WV	FL	
Local Director and/or Assistant Directors	6	4	10	10	30
Administrators of Postsecondary Vocational Institutions, e.g., Presidents, Deans		1		2	3
Superintendents	2	5	6	2	15
Principals	2	2	2	4	10
Teachers	4		5		9
Local Vocational Coordinators	5				5
Placement Coordinator			4		4
Administrators–Student Services	3		1	1	5
Administrators–Instructional Services	1	1			2
Administrators–Communicty Services	1			1	2
Personnel in Research & Planning	4	2			6
Advisory Council Members (State/Local)	2		2		4
County Board of Education Members			3	7	10
Representatives of Business and Industry	3	6	3	3	15
CETA Directors	1	2		1	4
Personnel from Community-Based Organizations	10	2	14		26
Employment Service		2		1	3
Vocational Rehabilitation	1	1	1	1	4

and postsecondary institutions offering vocational education programs. It would encompass both urban and exurban geography. The boundaries of visitation would be constituted so that study staff would not have to travel more than a fifty-mile radius from the central city. The selection of area sites also took into account variations in economic stability and industrial mix in order to pose varying environmental contexts. As a result four primary regions of the country were chosen with the following characteristics:

- An area with a stable, primarily Anglo-Saxon population base, experiencing below average unemployment and depending on primary metal processing, chemical, and mining industry.
- An area of dynamic population growth, with racial–ethnic characteristics similar to the United States average, experiencing average unemployment with considerable immigration, and depending increasingly on tourism and service industries with little heavy industry and a substantial agricultural base.
- An area of above-average population growth, with an above-average population of Native Americans, experiencing a long-term labor shortage resulting in an exceptionally low unemployment rate, and depending on petroleum extraction and related industries.
- An area of stable or slightly declining population, having a broad mixture of racial and ethnic representation, experiencing high unemployment (especially among minority youth), and depending on heavy manufacturing industries

Within these four regions comprising thirteen counties, a total of ninety-one persons were interviewed in thirty-one different secondary and postsecondary schools. In addition, seventy persons representing twenty-one noneducational agencies were also interviewed. Table 1 provides a breakdown of types of persons participating in the dialogue sessions from both educational and noneducational agencies in each of the four states.

With the assistance of staff from the state divisions of vocational education in the four states, the project team contacted administrators in school districts and postsecondary institutions in each geographic area. Project staff were given permission to have discussions with administrative and instructional staff at all levels of each institution. Appointments with key staff were arranged before field visitations took place. Appointments with other administrative and instructional staff were left open, to be arranged onsite. This was also the case regarding visits with other providers of vocational education-related services, such as CETA prime sponsors, CBOs, vocational rehabilitation, economic development agencies, and so forth.

Collection of Information by Visitation, Observation, and Document Review

Upon their arrival at the local institutions, the study team held an open-ended discussion with the chief administrative officers, or if those persons were unavailable, with the top administrators responsible for vocational education. These persons would be asked to describe the environmental context surrounding the institution, describe its vocational programs, and talk about their perspectives about the planning and administrative issues and activities related to vocational education. Through this discussion, study team members were introduced to the institution and were able to identify salient planning activities that were occurring or had occurred in the recent past. After the initial discussion, team members were able to identify other district or school staff who had significant roles in planning or evaluating vocational education. The team attempted to visit such individuals,

whose role and title varied considerably from institution to institution and from state to state. For example, in one school district, most of the decisions were handled by the superintendent. In another district a vocational director and subordinates were delegated the responsibility for vocational programs. In addition to middle-management, the team also held open-ended discussions with teachers, whenever possible.

In all discussions, the study team attempted to secure information to confirm and complement information received from other persons or from available planning documents. In most instances more than one study staff member participated in a dialogue. Written notes were kept by each member of the team participating in a particular discussion.

In addition to discussions, team members also observed administrative behavior. They attended meetings where planning activities were taking place. For example, in one area, project staff attended a meeting of a regional vocational education planning council. On another occasion, a staff person attended (by invitation) a state agency conference on developing interagency program linkages for human resource and vocational education. Observations of administrative behavior were complemented by demonstrations of administrative concern. For example, if someone was commenting about the burden of paperwork required to fulfill legislative compliance, project staff would ask to see the forms and how and when they were to be completed.

A third feature of the visitation was collection and review of appropriate local planning and evaluation documents. Review of such documents allowed subsequent discussions to be more focused and pointed. By doing so, the project team was also able in many cases to determine whether certain kinds of data were important or unimportant in planning.

Information Analysis and Synthesis

Upon their return from field visitations, staff edited their discussion notes. This resulted in multiple sets of edited notes from each institution visited and from the majority of persons contacted in each institution. These notes were subjected to a content analysis, first by person, second by institution, and finally by state to derive cumulative totals

The content analysis was conducted by summarizing the notes and transferring findings to a set of recording sheets. Staff developed recording sheets for each of the five topical areas included in the investigation. The items listed on the recording sheets are designed to identify administrative practices, the outcomes of these activities, problems or constraints, and other notes and comments. Appendix C presents a sample of the recording sheets for analysis conducted for the topical areas. At the individual institution level, appropriate categories were check-marked. Multiple responses were possible in all categories. Responses were totaled for school districts and institutions in each state and for all schools and agencies in the four states.

An exception to this procedure occurred in the analysis of coordination patterns. To provide the most meaningful analysis, a complete set of recording sheets was compiled for each of a number of relationships. For example, for each vocational institution, one sheet was used to record the relationship with other local vocational education institutions. Another sheet was utilized to record the vocational education relationship with CETA, and additional sheets were used for vocational education and other agencies visited by the study team. An analysis was derived for each relationship, rather than the sum total of all relationships.

After one member of the staff had compiled recording sheets, other staff persons who had visited the same agencies reviewed the sheets for accuracy of classification and completeness. Some follow-up phone calls to schools and agencies visited in the field were made to clarify information items.

When the recording sheets had been completed for each topical area, it was then possible to summarize activities, outcomes, constraints, and benefits that resulted from planning and evaluation activities in a sample of vocational education institutions. Utilizing the completed recording sheets, staff members prepared brief written summaries of the state-of-the-art of each topical area. These summaries were shared among staff for review and commentary.

The findings presented in this report were assembled using the written summaries.

APPENDIX A

PLANNING RELATED DOCUMENTS COLLECTED FROM TWO STATES

Information from Colorado

"State Level" Documents

1. 1979-80 Annual Program Plan of Colorado State Plan
2. 1978-79 Annual Program Plan of Colorado State Plan
3. 1978-82 Annual and Five-Year State Plan
4. Accountability Report; Colorado State Plan 1978
5. 1976-77 Vocational Graduate Follow-up Analysis
6. State Assistance for Vocational Education (Colorado law)
7. (2) Personnel Listing, State Board for Community Colleges
8. Organization Chart, State Board
9. (2) Insight – Newsletter of State Board

Local Documents – Postsecondary and Adult

10. (2) Operating and Approved Postsecondary Vocational Programs
11. Colorado Postsecondary Data Collection System
12. Colorado Postsecondary Data Collection System, Corrections/Addisions/Instructions
13. VE-117 Adult Vocational Apprenticeship Program Data form
14. VE-137 Vocational Education Postsecondary Course Information

Local Documents – Secondary

15. Indexed calendar for LEA to submit planning forms
16. Section on Vocational Education Planning from new Local Administrator Handbook (under revision)
17. Form VE-115 Long-Range Local Plan and instruction
18. Form VE-120 (a) Institutional Application instructions and review criteria
19. Form VE -120 (b) Program Proposal Plan instructions and review criteria
20. Form VE-120 (g) Proposal for Vocational Guidance or Job Development Specialist Programs
21. Form VE-135 Student Accountability Data Tool
22. Form VE-116 Request for Supplemental Services Funds
23. Form VE-101 Equipment-Materials Application
24. Form VE-103 Request for Inventory Adjustment of Property
25. Form VE-120 (h) Funds for Submitting Work Experience and Study Proposals
26. Form VE-123 Additional Information Guideline for Submitting Proposals to Special Cooperative Programs
27. Form VE-130 Vocational Staff Information
28. Form VE-159 Colorado Resident Student Enrollment
29. Form VE-160 Quarterly or Semester Report of Entitlement for Vocational Education
30. Form WS-1 Application to Participate in Work-Study Program
31. Form VE-312 Equipment Purchased for Vocational Programs
32. Form for Reimbursement of Contracted Programs
33. Form WS-2 Quarterly Report on Vocational Work-Study Hours and Wages
34. Local Plan School District 50, Westminster, Colorado
35. Local Plan District 12, Thornton, Adams County, Colorado
36. Curriculum Guide, Boulder Valley Area Vocational Technical Center

Advisory Council and Other Organizations Documents

37. Agreement between State Department of Corrections and Vocational Education
38. 8th Annual Report, Colorado Advisory Council for Vocational Education
39. Brochure: The Vocational Education Advisory Committee
40. Memo from State Department to locals regarding advisory councils
41. Colorado Commission for Vocational Education Planning Minutes 3/29, 4/4, 4/13/77

Miscellaneous Materials

42. (2) Denver Business (Chamber of Commerce)
43. Seven Counties of Denver: Regional Business Data

Information from Wisconsin

"State Level" Documents

A. Reports, Position Papers

1. 1978-1979 State Plan
2. Procedures Manual to implement "Plan for Comprehensive VTAE to Wisconsin through 1980"
3. Wisconsin Five-Year State Plan for VTAE 1978-1982
4. 1979-1980 Plan Highlights
5. 1977-1978 Accountability Report, and 1979-1980 Annual Plan
6. Plan for Comprehensive VTAE to Wisconsin through 1980
7. Report to Governor for Development of VTAE 1973-1977
8. Cost Allocation Summary 1978-1979 (Projected)
9. Cost Allocation Summary 1977-1978 (Actual)
10. Financial Accounting.
11. 1975-1976 Statewide Student Follow-up Report
12. Report by RCU on Planning for Equity
13. 1977-1979 Budget
14. Report on Financing Local VTAE System
15. Wisconsin Administrative Code—Rules of VTAE
16. Draft Timetable—1980 Annual State Plan Development, Review, and Approval
17. Status of VTAE Administrator's Association Task Forces
18. Report of Joint Adm. Comm. on Physical Facilities
19. VTAE System Position Paper: District Cost Control Appeals
20. Assessment of Vocational Education in Wisconsin 1977, by Advisory Council
21. Letter from State Director to U.S. Senator with Report
22. Review of VTAE Joint Adm. Comm. on Academic Programs
23. Report of VTAE Joint Adm. Comm. on Continuing Education
24. Facilities Inventory and Utilization Report 1976-1977
25. Environmental Impact Statement—Site Selection for Skill Center
26. Assessment of Vocational Education in Wisconsin 1976, by Advisory Council
27. Paper titled: Planning, Research and Evaluation
28. District Plan/Application Guidelines

29. Calculation of FY 1979-80 Vocational Education Allocation
30. Policy Statements for Vocational Education in Wisconsin
31. Memo to District Directors on District Budget Process
32. Examples District Plan/Application

B. Memos

33. Memo from State Director (6/8/79)—Program Development
34. Memo from State Director—North Central VTAE District T&I Division Review, March 13-15, 1979
35. Memo from State Director—Workshop on 1980-1981 VEA District Plan/Application Preparation
36. Memo on Goal Setting
37. Memo from State Director to Affirmative Action Committee

C. Minutes

38. Minutes—UWS-VTAE Joint Administrative Committee on Continuing Education
39. Minutes: State Advisory Committee, Hospitality Management
40. Minutes: State Data Processing Advisory Committee
41. Minutes: State Distributive and Marketing Advisory Committee
42. Minutes: VTAE Administrator's Meeting
43. District Administrators Meeting
44. Minutes: Section 107 Meeting

D. Miscellaneous

45. Map of VTAE Districts and Full-Time Campuses
46. VTAE Personnel Directory 1978/1979
47. 1975 Wisconsin Agency Organization Chart
48. VTAE Agency Organization Chart
49. Report on NASDVE Conference on Issues and Implications for State Planning

"Local" Documents

50. Area VTAE District One Plan/Application 1980

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF DOCUMENTS SECURED FROM A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1. Community College – Management Information System
2. Community College – Graduate Follow-Up
3. Vocational Education Instructional Program Review Occupational Proficiency Programs
4. Comprehensive Education Plan 1979-1980
5. County School Board Meeting – October 18, 1977 – Minutes
6. Coordinating Council: Minutes; Needs Assessment/Recommendations
7. Career Education Center: Information Brochure
8. High School Class Schedule
9. Local Education Agency Application for Federal Funds
10. Handbook of Procedures for Implementing a Sex Equity Workshop
11. Schools – newspaper
12. A Computer-Based Career Guidance and Counselor Administrative Support System (brochure)
13. Master Plan of Instruction for Nursery Operations 1979-1980
14. Five-Year Comprehensive Vocational Education Plan 1977-1982
15. An Overview of Public Education (brochure)
16. Public Schools Plan for Placement Services and Follow-Up Studies
17. Follow-Up Survey of Former Students
18. Occupational Proficiency Programs: Final Class Report 1979-1980
19. Community Instructional Services Survey
20. Memorandum from State Department to Community College Presidents and District School Superintendents (regarding the availability of funds to support the development of regional council vocational education plans)
21. Folder of information regarding education linkage developments
22. Program Planning for Vocational Education
23. Requirements for Entry into Auto Mechanics, Auto Body, and Gasoline Mechanics Course
24. Public Schools Assessment Report
25. Room Inventory Form
26. Master Plan – CETA
27. Employment Survey Forms
28. Student Survey Forms

29. Chamber of Commerce Membership Directory
30. Resource and Curriculum Guide
31. Newsletter
32. Needs Assessment & Recommendations Vocational Education Planning
33. 1979-1980 Report of the Superintendent of Schools
34. Placement & Follow-Up Report 1977-1978

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE RECORDING FORMS FOR SUMMARIZING FIELD SITE EVIDENCE OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Data for Planning State: Institution: Interviewee:
(Program Expansion, Deletion, etc.)

Planning Activity	*Types of Data*	*Sources*	*Evidence*	*Problems*	*Comments/Needs Expressed*
Add Program ☐ Delete Program ☐ Expand Program ☐ Modify Program Significantly ☐ Describe:	Employment Describe:	Own Surveys ☐ Employment Service ☐ SDVE ☐ Regional/Local Planning Group ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	Local App. ☐ Other Doc. ☐ Cross Confirm ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	Not Current ☐ Not Accurate ☐ Not Usable in Present Form ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	
		SDVE ☐ Other State Agencies ☐ Local Government Agencies ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	Local App. ☐ Other Doc. ☐ Cross Confirm ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	Not Current ☐ Not Accurate ☐ Not Usable in Present Form ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	
		Local Districts Enrollments ☐ Costs ☐ Placements ☐ Student Interest ☐ SDVE ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	Local App. ☐ Other Doc. ☐ Cross Confirm ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	Not Current ☐ Not Accurate ☐ Not Usable in Present Form ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	

Coordination State: Institution: Interviewee:

	Purpose of Relationship	*Outcomes of Relationship*	*Problems Cited/Observed*	*Facilitators Cited*
Voc. Ed. with: SDVE ☐ Other Voc. Institutions ☐ Employment Service ☐ CETA ☐ CBO ☐ Rehabilitation ☐ Economic Development ☐ Advisory Council ☐ Employer–Community ☐ Other ☐	Long Range/Institutional Planning ☐ Annual Program Planning ☐ Coordinating Service to Particular Target Groups ☐ Sharing Useful Information/ Giving Counsel ☐ Compliance with Legislative Mandates ☐ Obtaining Political Support ☐ Increasing Mutual Awareness of Institutional Activities/Capabilities ☐ Other ☐ Describe:	Voc. Ed. Institution Utilized Data or Counsel From Other Institution in Long Range/ Institutional Planning (or Vice Versa) ☐ Voc. Ed. Institution Utilized Data/Counsel From the Institutions in Annual Program Planning Decisions (or Vice Versa) ☐ Voc. Ed. Institution Obtained Data From Other Institution for Inclusion in Reports Required by Federal/State Government (or Vice Versa) ☐ Voc. Ed. Institution Shared Facilities, Equipment, or Personnel with Other Institution (or Vice Versa) ☐ Voc. Ed. Institution Operated Special Programs Under Contract to Other Institutions (or Vice Versa) ☐ Relationship Minimal ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined ☐ Describe:	Turf Protection/Competitive for Resources ☐ Personality Conflict ☐ Organizational Policy/ Procedure ☐ Legislation ☐ Lack of Awareness ☐ Other ☐ Describe: No Evidence	

50

Planning for Special Needs State: Institution: Interviewee:

Purpose	*Evidence of Planning*	*Outcomes*	*Constraints*	*Comments/Notes*
Planning for Sex Equity	☐ Meetings ☐ Local Application ☐ Other Documents ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined	☐ Special Programs ☐ Enrollment Changes ☐ Policy/Procedures Changes ☐ Attitudinal Changes ☐ Other ☐ Did Not Determine	☐ Lack of Local Funds ☐ Lack of State Funds ☐ Community Values ☐ Lack of Student Interest ☐ School Personnel Attitudes ☐ Other ☐ Did Not Determine	
Planning for Disadvantaged and Handicapped	☐ Meetings ☐ Local Application ☐ Other Documents ☐ Other ☐ Not Determined	☐ Special Programs ☐ Enrollment Changes ☐ Policy/Procedure Changes ☐ Attitudinal Changes ☐ Other ☐ Did Not Determine	☐ Lack of Local Funds ☐ Lack of State Funds ☐ Community Values ☐ Lack of Student Interest ☐ School Personnel Attitudes ☐ Other ☐ Did Not Determine	

Evaluation for Planning State: Institution: Interviewee:

Source	*Evidence of Evaluation Utilizations*	*Problems in Evaluation*	*Notes/Comments*
External SDVE Initiated Assessments, Reports ☐ LACVE or Craft Committee ☐ Other ☐ Did Not Determine ☐ *Internal* Student Follow-up ☐ Employer Follow-up ☐ Staff Assessments of Program Relevance, Quality ☐ Other ☐ Did Not Determine ☐	Procedures/Practices Document ☐ Evidence on Local Application ☐ Documentation that Evaluation Affected Recycling Decisions ☐ Other Evidence ☐ Did Not Determine ☐ Describe Evaluation Utilization:	Appears to have little or no use locally ☐ Other ☐	

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